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YELSTIN HOSPITALIZED. Itar-Tass reported today that Russian president Boris Yeltsin has been hospitalized with heart problems. Tass quoted Viktor Ilyushin, a senior aide to the 64-year-old Russian president, as Petersburg and Krasnoyarsk krai, had the highest rates of crimes committed with firearms, according to Justice Minister Valentin Kovalev. He said also that the number of police officers killed or wounded in the line of duty is on the upswing, with 186 such deaths during the same period versus 183 for all of 1994. (6) In Kovalev's words, the situation has been become "dramatic," all the more so since there are too few policemen to go around. While the Federal Program to Strengthen the Fight Against Crime recommends devoting five trillion rubles to police work, the money cannot be found.

ESTONIAN PARLIAMENT BACKS NEW GOVERNMENT. Estonia's parliament on Thursday backed a new government formed by Prime Minister Tiit Vahi after his previous administration collapsed amid scandal. Vahi received 55 votes in favor of the new government, five against and 19 abstentions in the 101-seat house, his office said.

LATVIA BOWS TO LITHUANIA IN OFFSHORE DISPUTE. Latvian prime minister Maris Gailis told his Lithuanian counterpart Adolfas Slezevicius yesterday by telephone that Latvia will delay signing an oil exploration agreement with the US Amoco Oil company in a disputed offshore area, until the two Baltic countries sign a treaty defining their mutual maritime border. Other Latvian officials indicate that Latvia is set to sign an agreement with Amoco and the Swedish company OPAB for oil prospecting in that part of Latvia's offshore zone which is not in dispute. (11)

Latvia and Lithuania exchanged diplomatic notes last week over reported Latvian plans to unilaterally commence exploration in the disputed area. Gailis implicitly disagreed with his energy minister Juris Ozolins who has favored going ahead with the drilling contract despite Lithuanian objections. Amoco and OPAB negotiators are expected to start negotiations in Riga today.

LITHUANIAN-RUSSIAN OFFSHORE NEGOTIATIONS RESUME. Lithuania faces a Russian claim in the eastern sector of its offshore zone, where Russia claims a potentially attractive oil deposit known as the D-6 area. Negotiations were resumed on October 24 at the Foreign Ministry in Moscow, after having been suspended in the summer when experts were unable to agree on a demarcation line. (12) Lithuania is not a maritime neighbor of Russia proper but of its enclave in East Prussia around Koenigsberg (renamed Kaliningrad) which leapfrogs Lithuania westward.